

Fw: When Academia Successfully Paradigm-shifts, They Deserve Praise

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Subject: When Academia Successfully Paradigm-shifts, They Deserve Praise



When Academia Successfully Paradigm-shifts, They Deserve Praise

"M", Tristan-Gan MIANO Apr 2

Although I've been harsh on academia lately, I want to make a habit of pointing out where institutionalized Science / Scholastic Study deserves praise, so we can note what it looks like when they succeed in establishing a new orthodoxy out of a previous heterodoxy without causing societal instability:

Birds. Yes birds.

Let's try to make hieroglyphs of this success too if we can, so we're not biased towards pessimism next time around, okay? No offense, builders of UC Berkeley's beautiful and enormous Biology building. (It does have a large Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton the public used to be able to see at most hours of the day).

Let me emphasize WHY this was such a success.

As most people alive today, including Millennials, likely recall learning in school, "The dinosaurs went extinct. (Something like 65-66 million years ago, still with debate about exactly how)." We all were taught this, and indeed, the mainstream academic orthodoxy believed this for quite a while (though not THAT long, in sociological terms, since the ability to understand evolution as well as extinction events as well as geologic timescales are, even now, still somewhat contentious, and Richard Dawkins banked his career on that not too long ago).

That is NOT the case any longer, and I would add that particular institutionalized belief has been overturned remarkably peacefully and diplomatically, by the academic establishment. The dinosaurs *didn't* go extinct by any meaningful, logically consistent definition of the word "dinosaur" (and I assume all such definitions that tried to preserve the felt, intuitive meaning of the word "dinosaur" had been tried).

Yes, the enormous, carnivorous monster-looking ones appear to have disappeared. But even those were in fact far-more closely related to birds (and living along with them were dinosaurs we today would instantly identify as "birds" without hesitancy or debate). And, I would advise caution here too, given the existence of the fearsome Harpy Eagle (it eats monkeys. We're primates).

They did it folks. And they performed admirably with this magnitude of an update. The main Wikipedia entry on "birds" acknowledges this paradigm shift and that alone is a huge acknowledgment. So extra extra kudos to Biologists. Congratulations!

P.S. I always knew birds were dinosaurs, way before the establishment, of course. *Smugly hipster smugs*.



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